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CONGRESSMAN BURTON COMMENTS ON THE U.S.- INDIA CIVILIAN NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT

(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Dan Burton [R-IN-05], a Senior Member of the House International Relations Committee and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Pakistan Caucus, released the following statement on the proposed United States-India Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement:

"I am highly encouraged to hear of the U.S.-India Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement announced earlier today. I applaud President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India on their hard work on this very historic and unique agreement. In addition to strengthening our burgeoning bi-lateral friendship, this agreement will hopefully enhance international nuclear non-proliferation efforts and, for the first time ever, bring transparency and internationally-supervised monitoring to a majority of India's nuclear facilities.

"The devil is always in the details though, and I know that a number of my colleagues still have serious questions regarding India's commitment to separating its civilian and military nuclear programs, as well as India's position on the proliferation of nuclear technology and enriched fuels; and whether this agreement will undermine regional stability and United States relations with our good friend and ally Pakistan. These are appropriate questions I intend to ask, and I look forward to a lively debate on the proposed agreement.

"In the end though, as I indicated to Prime Minister Singh, his Defense Minister, and Members of the Indian Parliament, during my recent visit to India and Pakistan in December, if the agreement contained an ironclad guarantee that our technology be only used for civilian (non-military) purposes and if there is a strict verification and oversight procedure, I would be inclined to support the agreement. And that being the case, I would urge my colleagues to support the agreement.

"I once again applaud President Bush and Prime Minister Singh on their historic efforts to improve U.S.-India relations."